

# Health Check

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## What you should know about heart disease

Heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death for men and women in the United States.



By **GEORGE ADESINA, MD, MSPH, FACC,**  
Cardiologist,  
Kelsey-Seybold Clinic

*Dr. Adesina is a board-certified Cardiology specialist currently caring for patients at Kelsey-Seybold's Berthelsen Main Campus, Clear Lake Clinic, and Pearland Clinic.*



### What is heart disease?

The term “heart disease” refers to several types of heart conditions. The most common type of heart disease in the United States is coronary artery disease, which affects the blood flow to the heart. Decreased blood flow can cause a heart attack.

### Anatomy of a heart attack

Your heart is the hardest working muscle in your body. It needs a constant supply of blood, oxygen, and nutrients delivered by arteries. Should an artery become obstructed or blocked, heart muscle can begin to die within a matter of minutes: This is a heart attack.

People seem surprised to learn that heart disease kills more women than breast cancer. Symptoms for women are somewhat different than those for men. For example, women don't usually experience the type of chest pains commonly associated with men. This misconception can pose a health risk as women tend not to recognize their symptoms and delay seeking treatment. But for either gender, don't expect symptoms to occur like you see in movies or on TV where actors dramatically clutch their chests and collapse. In real life, symptoms can be subtle and harder to recognize.

### For women, symptoms usually include:

- Shortness of breath.
- Lower-chest discomfort often mistaken as indigestion.
- Heaviness or pain in arms or between shoulder blades.
- Nausea and dizziness.
- Sudden, unexplained jaw pain.
- Chest pain, though more subtle than in men.

### For men, symptoms usually include:

- Chest pain – may be mild or crushingly severe.
- Nausea or dizziness, often with profuse sweating.
- Shortness of breath.
- Rapid pulse or irregular heartbeat.
- Sudden, unexplained fatigue or weakness.

Have regular medical evaluations that include checking blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and, if the physician feels the need, glucose levels. If so indicated, a cardiologist can perform additional tests to further assess your cardiovascular condition.

*Dr. Adesina is a renowned cardiologist who welcomes new patients.  
Learn more by entering his name at [kelsey-seybold.com/bios](https://kelsey-seybold.com/bios).*

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